

Message Text

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TO USLOSACLANT IMMEDIATE

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EXDIS MILITARY PLS HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE FOR ADMIRAL KIDD

FOL RPT NATO 08746 SENT ACTION SECSTATE & SECDEF INFO ALL NATO
CAPITALS & USNMR SHAPE BE DTD 13 SEP 77

QUOTE: S E C R E T NATO 08746

EXDIS

DEPT PLEASE PASS TO USLOSACLANT FOR ADMIRAL KIDD; MILITARY
ADDRESSEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NATO, MNUC, NPG

SUBJECT: SEPTEMBER 13 NPG PERMREPS MEETING - US STATEMENT
THERE FOLLOWS BELOW THE OPENING STATEMENT DELIVERED BY
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE MCGIFFERT AT THE SEPTEMBER
13, 1977 MEETING OF NPG PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES ON
ENHANCED RADIATION/REDUCED BLAST WEAPONS. DISCUSSIONS AT
THE MEETING ARE REPORTED SEPTTEL. BEGIN TEXT:

. WE APPRECIATE VERY MUCH YOUR WILLINGNESS TO RECEIVE
THE US DELEGATION AND TO CONTRIBUTE TO OUR CONSIDERATION
OF THIS ISSUE.

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. AS YOU KNOW, THE SUBJECT OF ENHANCED RADIATION HAS
BEEN DISCUSSED NUMEROUS TIMES IN THE NUCLEAR PLANNING
GROUP, AS PART OF THE OVERALL THEATER NUCLEAR FORCE MODERN-
IZATION PROGRAM. FOR EXAMPLE,

. -- IN JANUARY 1976 THE US PRESENTED A PAPER ON

TNF MODERNIZATION;

. -- AT THE JUNE 1976 MINISTERIAL, THE NPG ENDORSED BASIC PRINCIPLES OF MODERNIZATION, AND WELCOMED THE US PROGRAM TO INTRODUCE IMPROVED NUCLEAR ARTILLERY;

. -- IN THE FALL OF 1976, MR COTTER BRIEFED THE NPG PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES ON THE NATO AND WARSAW PACT THEATER NUCLEAR FORCES, INCLUDING THE ENHANCED RADIATION WARHEADS PLANNED FOR LANCE AND THE 8" SHELL.

MUCH OF WHAT WE HAVE TO SAY TODAY WAS INCLUDED IN THOSE EARLIER PRESENTATIONS.

. I WISH TO EMPHASIZE THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAS NOT MADE A DECISION FOR OR AGAINST PRODUCTION AND DEPLOYMENT OF THESE WEAPONS. HE HAS DEFERRED DECISION TO PERMIT CONSULTATION WITH OUR NATO ALLIES.

. THE DECISION ON THE PRODUCTION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS REMAINS, AS IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN, A US RESPONSIBILITY. HOWEVER, A SUBSTANTIAL FACTOR IN OUR CONSIDERATIONS WILL BE YOUR VIEWS ON DEPLOYMENT OF ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPONS IN EUROPE. IN THIS CONNECTION, WE MUST CONSIDER OUR PUBLIC POSITIONS WHEN A DECISION, EITHER PRO OR CON, IS ANNOUNCED. JUST AS OUR DECISION WILL BE AFFECTED BY YOUR VIEWS, WE WOULD EXPECT THAT OUR DECISION WILL HAVE WIDE SUPPORT
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WITHIN THE ALLIANCE. AT A MINIMUM, WE WOULD WANT TO AVOID A SITUATION IN WHICH POSSIBLE PRIVATE DIFFERENCES LEAD TO A DIVISIVE PUBLIC CONTROVERSY. AS WITH ANY ALLIANCE CAPABILITY, WE MUST ALL BEAR A SHARE OF THE BURDEN, JUST AS WE ALL BENEFIT FROM OUR ALLIANCE.

. THE DECISION WHETHER TO DEPLOY ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPONS IS COMPLEX. AMONG THE IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS, IT SEEMS TO US, ARE:

. FIRST, THE EFFECT OF ER WEAPONS ON THE MILITARY EFFECTIVENESS OF NATO'S THEATER NUCLEAR FORCES: ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPONS ARE, AS YOU KNOW, VIEWED BY US AS HAVING MILITARY UTILITY. THEY PROVIDE, IN OUR VIEW, ADDITIONAL TARGETTING FLEXIBILITY BY RETAINING EFFECTIVENESS AGAINST ENEMY TARGETS WHILE REDUCING THE RISK TO FRIENDLY FORCES AND CIVILIAN POPULATIONS. THE SOVIET TANK THREAT IS A CONSIDERATION OF WHICH ALL NATO NATIONS MUST TAKE ACCOUNT. A MAJOR VIRTUE OF THE ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPON IS ITS EFFECTIVENESS AGAINST A TANK ASSAULT.

. SECOND, THE RELATIONSHIP OF ER WEAPONS TO THE

OVERALL STRATEGY WITHIN THE NATO ALLIANCE: ER WEAPONS FIT THE CURRENT TRIAD STRATEGY. AS ONE COMPONENT OF THE TNF MODERNIZATION PROGRAM, ER WEAPONS COULD HELP MAINTAIN THE DETERRENT VALUE OF THAT MIDDLE LEG OF THE TRIAD. THEY WOULD NOT AND COULD NOT SUBSTITUTE FOR NATO'S PRESENT AND PLANNED CONVENTIONAL AND STRATEGIC CAPABILITIES. NOR WOULD THEY DIMINISH THE NEED FOR MAINTAINING THE BALANCE WITHIN OUR THEATER NUCLEAR FORCES. WE MUST RECOGNIZE THE RISK THAT ER WEAPONS COULD BE SEEN AS EVIDENCE OF AN INCREASED EMPHASIS ON BATTLEFIELD NUCLEAR WAR-FIGHTING; AND IF WE GO AHEAD WITH THEIR DEPLOYMENT, WE MUST MINIMIZE THAT MISPERCEPTION.

. THIRD, THE EFFECT OF ER WEAPONS ON THE NUCLEAR
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THRESHOLD: THIS ISSUE ULTIMATELY MUST REST ON JUDGMENT. IN ANALYZING THE ISSUE ALL PROBABLY CAN AGREE THAT ANY MODERNIZATION OF BATTLEFIELD NUCLEAR WEAPONS -- WHETHER WITH ER OR FISSION WEAPONS -- WILL INVOLVE IMPROVEMENTS THAT MAKE THEIR POTENTIAL USE MORE EFFECTIVE. YET SUCH IMPROVEMENTS NEED NOT LOWER THE NUCLEAR THRESHOLD, FOR THE USE OF ANY NUCLEAR WEAPON CONSTITUTES THE MOST AGONIZING DECISION THAT ANY OF OUR POLITICAL LEADERS COULD FACE BECAUSE OF THE RISK OF A NUCLEAR RESPONSE AND THE POTENTIAL OF NUCLEAR ESCALATION. AS PRESIDENT CARTER HAS SAID: "THESE WEAPONS WOULD NOT MAKE THAT DECISION ANY EASIER." CLEARLY, WE MUST DO ALL IN OUR POWER TO AVOID HAVING TO FACE THAT DECISION. HENCE, THE STRENGTH OF CONVENTIONAL FORCES IS A FAR MORE SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN RESPECT TO THE NUCLEAR THRESHOLD AND FOR THAT REASON, AMONG OTHERS, DEPLOYMENT OF ER WARHEADS SHOULD NOT IN ANY WAY DIMINISH THE NEED TO IMPROVE NATO'S CONVENTIONAL FORCES.

. FOURTH, POSSIBLE SOVIET REACTIONS: AGAIN, THIS IS A SUBJECT ON WHICH OUR -- AND YOUR -- BEST JUDGMENT MUST BE EXERCISED. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE DECISION TO DEPLOY ER WEAPONS WOULD AFFECT OUR DEALING WITH THE SOVIETS' THERE IS NO NECESSARY LINKAGE BETWEEN SALT OR MBFR FOR EXAMPLE, AND ER WEAPONS. WE CANNOT IGNORE THAT THE SOVIETS MAY DECIDE TO DEPLOY THESE WEAPONS, NOR CAN WE PREDICT WHETHER OUR DECISION ONE WAY OR ANOTHER WOULD INFLUENCE THAT DECISION.

. WE SHOULD ALSO CONSIDER THOSE GENUINE EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN WHICH WE HEAR FROM PEOPLE IN OUR OWN COUNTRIES. IN THIS CONNECTION, WE SEE IT AS QUITE IMPORTANT THAT OUR CHARACTERIZATION OF THESE WEAPONS ACCURATELY DESCRIBE WHAT THEY DO AND WHAT THEY DO NOT DO. WE MUST PUT TO REST THE
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IDEA THAT THE COLLATERAL DAMAGE AVOIDED IS TO STRUCTURES ONLY. IN FACT, THESE WEAPONS BECAUSE OF THEIR REDUCED BLAST AND THERMAL EFFECTS, ARE DESIGNED TO MINIMIZE CASUALTIES AMONG FRIENDLY FORCES AND NON-COMBATANTS.

. OUR CONSIDERATION OF THESE AND OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS SHOULD BE DIRECTED TOWARDS ASSESSING THE DESIRABILITY OF THE TWO OPTIONS REALISTICALLY OPEN TO THE UNITED STATES:

. -- THE US COULD DECIDE TO PRODUCE THE WEAPONS FOR DEPLOYMENT IN EUROPE.

-- THE US COULD DECIDE NOT TO PRODUCE.

. WE BELIEVE YOU ALREADY HAVE SUFFICIENT TECHNICAL MATERIAL ON THE ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPONS, ALTHOUGH WE ARE PREPARED TO ADDRESS TECHNICAL QUESTIONS.

. WE RECOGNIZE THAT IT MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE FOR ALL OF YOU TO GIVE US A FIRM POSITION TODAY. WE REQUEST, HOWEVER, THAT YOU CONVEY YOUR VIEWS TO US SHORTLY.

. WE WELCOME YOUR COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS, AND ARE PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN KNOWING THOSE CONSIDERATIONS WHICH YOU BELIEVE SHOULD BE KEPT IN MIND TO MEET YOUR CONCERNS IN ANY GIVEN DECISION. END TEXT. BENNETT
UNQUOTE VANCE

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